

Abstract 507

TITLE: The Cochrane Collaboration: Promoting Evidence-Based Medicine and Public Health Practices

AUTHORS: Kennedy, G; Rutherford, G (University of California, San Francisco); Gavin, C; Schmid, G (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA)

ISSUE: Physicians, public health practitioners, policy makers and health care consumers are deluged with unmanageable amounts of information about the best approaches to prevention, treatment and health care delivery. Evidence-based medicine has the goal of helping providers and consumers make informed decisions about prevention and treatment based on the best available scientific evidence.

SETTING AND PROJECT: The Cochrane Collaboration is an international network of health care professionals and consumers whose mission is to develop, disseminate and maintain comprehensive, regularly updated systematic reviews of the best evidence from research. Systematic reviews are commissioned and managed by 47 Collaborative Review Groups, organized around medical and public health specialties. The reviews are published quarterly in *The Cochrane Library* on CD-ROM and the Internet.

RESULTS: In 1997, based in San Francisco, a Cochrane review group on HIV infection and AIDS was established which has four working groups: (1) behavioral, social and policy prevention interventions (working closely with CDC's Prevention Research Synthesis Project); (2) biomedical prevention interventions; (3) treatment, prognosis and diagnosis; and (4) health services research. Twenty-eight reviews are completed or in progress including reviews of the effectiveness of behavioral risk reduction interventions, treatments for the prevention of perinatal HIV transmission and the effectiveness and safety of vaginal microbicides. Working in close collaboration with the Cochrane HIV/AIDS Group, in 1998, a review group on sexually transmitted diseases was established, based at CDC. The Cochrane STD Group focuses on two broad intervention objectives, health outcomes and behavior change (which may have endpoints short of actual health outcomes, but which contribute critically to health outcomes). Diagnostics and economics are areas of emphasis. In addition to reviews, comprehensive, international, databases of ongoing and completed intervention studies are available. These databases include studies of HIV and STD prevention and treatment.

LESSONS LEARNED: Both Cochrane Groups have a growing membership, with reviewers interested in collaboration in HIV and STD prevention research. Community-based organization staff, HIV prevention program planners, people living with HIV/AIDS and clinicians are eager for results of the reviews. In this session we will inform the audience about the resources available and opportunities for individuals to become involved in the Cochrane Collaborative Review Groups.

PRESENTER CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Gail E. Kennedy, MPH

Address: 74 New Montgomery Street, Suite 600
San Francisco, CA 94105

Phone: (415) 597-9373

Fax: (415) 597-9213

E-mail: gkenney@psg.ucsf.edu